

Real-time Operating Systems and Systems Programming

Optimizing for performance
Lecture 10

Optimizing compilers

- Same code has different representations
- Some are more efficient (yet less readable)
- Assembler code is optimized

How to optimize: use -O option for gcc

Why not the default option?

Limitations

- Never alter the correct program behaviour
- Their understanding of program behaviour is limited
- Compilation must be fast

Optimization blockers

```
void foo1(int *xp, int *yp)
{
    *xp += *yp;
    *xp += *yp;
}
```

```
void foo2(int *xp, int *yp)
{
    *xp += 2* *yp;
}
```

- Similar code
- First uses 6 memory references, second 3
- Would be possible to optimize?
- What happens if pointers are equal?

Optimization blockers

```
int f(int);  
int func1(x) {  
    return f(x) + f(x) \  
        + f(x)+ f(x);  
}
```

```
int func2(x) {  
    return 4*f(x)  
}
```

- func2() faster
- but only in case f() is without side effects
- Usually not tested

Program performance assessment

- Speed of processors can vary
- Useful measure for examples: *cycles per element*.
- What is the code overhead for any array element

Base example

```
typedef struct {  
    int len;  
    data_t *data;  
} vec_rec, *vec_ptr;
```

```
typedef int data; //or float for experiments
```

```
#define IDENT 0 // or 1
```

```
#define OPER + //or *
```

```
// actual implementation of vectors less interesting
```

Base implementation

```
void combine1(vec_ptr v, data_t *dest) {  
    int i;  
    *dest = IDENT;  
    for (i = 0; i < vec_length(v); i++) {  
        data_t val;  
        get_vec_element(v, i, &val);  
        *dest = *dest OPER val;  
    }  
}
```

//	int	float
// unoptimized	+42 *41	+41 *160
// optimized -O2	+31 *33	+31 *143

Moving calculations from loop

```
void combine2(vec_ptr v, data_t *dest) {  
    int i;  
    int length = vec_length(v)  
    *dest = IDENT;  
    for (i = 0; i < length; i++) {  
        data_t val;  
        get_vec_element(v, i, &val);  
        *dest = *dest OPER val;  
    }  
}
```

// old optimized -O2	+31 *33 +31 *143
// move vec_len	+22 *21 +21 *135

Reducing function calls

```
void combine3(vec_ptr v, data_t *dest) {  
    int i;  
    int length = vec_length(v)  
    data_t *data = get_vec_start(v);  
    *dest = IDENT;  
    for (i = 0; i < length; i++) {  
        *dest = *dest OPER data[i];  
    }  
}
```

```
// move vec_len          +22 *21  +21 *135  
// direct data access    +6  *9   +8  *117
```

// Note: we gained speed by losing in abstraction & modularity

Decompilation analysis

Compare 3

dest in edi, data in ecx, i in edx, length in esi

.L18	:loop
movl (%edi), %eax	Read dest
imull (%ecx, %edx, 4), %eax	Multiply data
movl %eax, (%edi)	Write *dest
incl %edx	i++
cmpl %esi, %edx	Compare i:length
jl .L18	if < goto loop

Compare 4

data in eax, x in ecx, i in edx, length in esi

.L24	:loop
imull (%eax, %edx, 4) %ecx	Multiply by data[i]
incl %edx	i++
cmpl %esi, %edx	Compare i:length
jl .L24	If <, goto loop

Storage variable

```
void combine4(vec_ptr v, data_t *dest) {  
    int i;  
    int length = vec_length(v)  
    data_t *data = get_vec_start(v);  
    data_t x = IDENT;  
    *dest = IDENT;  
    for (i = 0; i < length; i++) {  
        x = x OPER data[i];  
    }  
    *dest = x;  
}
```

// direct data access +6 *9 +8 *117

// temporary variable +2 *4 +3 *5

// Why not automatic?

Different functions

- `combine3(v, get_vec_start(v) + 2);`
- `combine4(v, get_vec_start(v) + 2);`
- Last element used for destination

c3

2 3 5

2 2 1

2 3 2

2 3 6

2 3 36

2 3 36

c4

2 3 5

2 3 5

2 3 5

2 3 5

2 3 5

2 3 30

Aside: further optimizations

- Modern processors use pipelining, parallelization
- Can be used for advantage

Loop unrolling

```
void combine5(vec_ptr v, data_t *dest) {
    int i;
    int length = vec_length(v)
    int limit = length - 2;
    data_t *data = get_vec_start(v);
    data_t x = IDENT;
    *dest = IDENT;
    for (i = 0; i < length; i += 3) {
        x = x OPER data[i] OPER data[i+1] OPER data[i+2];
    }
    for(; i < length; i++) {
        x = x OPER data[i];
    }
    *dest = x;
}
```

// temporary variable	+2	*4	+3	*5
// loop unroll x3	+1.3	*4	+3	*5

// How many unrollings optimal?

Pointer code

- Use pointer code for speedups

```
void combine4p(vec_ptr v, data_t *dest) {  
    int length = vec_length(v)  
    data_t *data = get_vec_start(v);  
    data_t *dend = data + length;  
    data_t x = IDENT;  
    for (; data < dend; data++) {  
        x = x OPER *data;  
    }  
    *dest = x;  
}
```

// temporary variable	+2	*4	+3	*5
// pointer code	+3	*4	+3	*5

// Mostly useless here, but really depends on compiler/platform
// Readability often priority

Parallelism

- It's often good to parallelize code

```
void combine6(vec_ptr v, data_t *dest) {
    int length = vec_length(v);
    int limit = length - 1;
    data_t = *data = get_vec_start(v);
    data_t x0 = IDENT; data_t x1 = IDENT;
    int i;
    for(i = 0; i < limit; i+=2) {
        x0 = x0 OPER data[i];
        x1 = x1 IOPER data[i+1];
    }
    for(;i < length; i++) {
        x0 = x0 OPER data[i];
    }
    *dest = x0 OPER x1;
}
// loop unroll x3          +1.3 *4  +3  *5
// parallelize by 2        +1.5 *2  +2  *2.5
```

End results

- For most things unroll x8, parallel x4 is best
- For integer addition, best unroll x16
- **on Pentium III**
- Your results would be different

Less predictable features

- Cached data
- Load/store latency
- Branch prediction (predictive execution)

What to do in real-life?

- High level design: choose appropriate algorithms and data structures.
- Basic coding principles
 - Eliminate excessive function calls, move computations out from loops, compromise on modularity
 - Eliminate unnecessary memory references. Use temporary variables to hold intermediate results. Store results only when final value calculated

Real-Life 2

- Low level optimizations
 - Try different pointer-array code
 - Reduce loop overhead by unrolling them
 - Pipelined architecture: Find ways to split iterations when needed
- Avoid introducing errors by unittesting.
Benchmark to find anomalies

Profiling

- Gprof
 - calculates cpu time for programs
 - counts function calling
 - thus gives data on what to optimize for greater gain
- Use -pg option for compiling on gcc
 - runs slower due to data collection, gmon.out file
- gprof prog
to analyze (gives a table of functions, times, etc)

Code Efficiency

- To avoid macro definitions, C99 has keyword: inline
- When checking for alternatives, use switch carefully:
 - Put more popular cases first
 - Use function pointer arrays
- Inline assembly
- Global variables (but maintenance nightmare)

Code Efficiency

- Fixed-vs-floating point: former is faster
 - Small amount of decimal places: $val \ll 2$
- Use native word size (bus + registers are faster)

Code Size

- Standard library routines refer to other functions. Write your own printf()
- Goto is bad, yet good for jumping out of nested loops.

```
Int fun(void) {  
    /* working */  
    goto CLEANING; /* in case of error */  
    /* more work */  
    return SUCCESS;  
CLEANING:  
    /* cleanup here */  
    return FAILURE;  
}
```

Memory Usage

- Reduce dependence on stack & heap by using ROM for constant values (declare them as const)
- Some constants change: use flash memory & technicians
- Stack space estimation: fill memory with some pattern; check changes after running

Power-saving

- Necessary for battery-powered devices
- Processor modes (PXA255 example)
 - Turbo – minimize memory access due to waiting
 - Run – default mode
 - Idle – processor not clocked, peripherals operate
 - Sleep – lowest power state
- Clock frequency – tricky, needs HW knowledge
- Reduce external memory access – cache, processor memory

Optimization problems

- Dead code elimination
 - Declare variables as volatile
- Debugging more difficult: breakpoints missing, functions split and code different